

Excursus on Battling the Flesh part 3 Defending against the flesh

Purpose: To remind all believers of God's grace in giving us His Spirit to enable us to defend against the Flesh

Introduction:

- Understand the nature of the Flesh's temptations
 - Understand the stages of temptations in general
 - INCLINATION or attraction—Not sinful at this point, no guilt
 - CONSIDERATION or fascination/preoccupation—Begin to embrace it
 - PERMISSION or embracing— consider the sin to be worthy of embracing
 - PARTICIPATION or indulging—an act which weakens our will
 - HABITUATION or normalizing—we become a slave to sin
 - IDENTIFICATION or characterization—hard to imagine living with the sin
 - Understand the makeup of your own soul
 - SENSES (see, hear, taste, smell, touch)—we gain information for our soul
 - UNDERSTANDING
 - IMAGINATION/fantasy, including emotions
 - MIND/understanding/reason
 - INCLINATION
 - CONSCIENCE
 - HEART, including affections
- 1) Understand your relationship with the Holy Spirit
- a) KEEP ON WALKING in the Spirit—Galatians 5:16, 25
 - b) THE FRUIT of the Spirit—Galatians 5:22-23
 - c) DO NOT QUENCH the Spirit—1st Thessalonians 5:16-22
 - i) Context—one's relationship to God's Word
 - ii) "Do not quench" [σβέννυμι]—to stop something from completing its intended purpose, to suppress or extinguish
 - iii) Specific thoughts
 - (1) Do not despise (consider as nothing) [ἐξουθενέω] the teaching of God's Word
 - (2) Examine [δοκιμάζω] every teaching carefully
 - (a) Hold fast [κατέχω] to the good teaching
 - (b) Abstain [ἀπέχω] from every appearance of bad teaching
 - d) DO NOT GRIEVE the Spirit—Ephesians 4:29-32
 - i) Context—poor communication and attitudes
 - ii) Specific thoughts

- (1) Put off improper speech which tears down rather than builds up with grace—4:29
 - (2) Do not bring sorrow to (do not offend) the Spirit [λυπέω]—4:30
 - (a) How? To offend Him with our sinful speech which is either lying or poor quality and non-edifying
 - (3) Improper attitudes and actions—4:31
 - (a) Bitterness (perpetual animosity, smoldering resentment, crabby, irritable, harshness) [πικρία] produces malice (harmful intent) [κακία]
 - (b) Wrath (explosive anger) [θυμός] produces clamor (loud arguments, scolding, quarreling, sounds like “kraaaahh”) [κραυγή]
 - (c) Anger (settled anger, chronic θυμός) [ὀργή] produces harmful speech (disrespectfully wounding one’s reputation) [βλασφημία]
 - (4) Proper attitudes and actions—4:32
 - (a) Kind [χρηστός]—mildness, mellow, appropriate, does not lie or hurt people in anger; does not steal, use words that hurt; opposite of bitterness and rudeness
 - (b) Tenderhearted [εὐσπλαγχνός]—the opposite of malice; not bitter, not long-angry or quick tempered, not slanderous, not harboring negative feelings toward others, a manifestation of pity to the difficult circumstances of others
 - (c) While forgiving [χαρίζομαι]—not harboring bitterness; the promise to grant someone their request, not because they deserve it, but because they asked to be forgiven; a promise not to bring it up to myself, to you, or to others
- e) **KEEP ON BEING COMPLETED** by the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18-f
- i) Context—wise living (5:15ff)
 - ii) Specific thoughts
 - (1) Be careful how you walk (or see how carefully you are walking)—5:15-16
 - (a) Not as unwise [ἄσοφος], but wise [σοφός]
 - (b) While making the most of your time [ἐξαγοράζω καιρός]
 - (2) Don’t be foolish [ἄφρων]—5:17
 - (a) While understanding (putting things together) [συνίημι] what God’s will is
 - (3) Be filled (completed) [πληρώω] by [ἐν] with Spirit—5:18-f
 - Four ongoing results of this completion. How will I know?
 - (a) Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs
 - (b) Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord
 - (c) Always giving thanks for all things to God the Father
 - (d) Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ
- f) **DO NOT PLAN** to gratify the flesh’s desires—Romans 13:14

- i) Context—Christ's return
 - ii) Specific thoughts
 - (1) Be alert—13:11
 - (2) Put off [ἀποτίθημι] wrong actions and put on [ἐνδύω] God's armor—13:12
 - (a) The word picture is that of a soldier who has taken the night off and has spent his time drinking and partying. He is still wearing his party clothes. Now, just before dawn, he is called to battle. Change your clothes! Put on your armor! Change your focus! It's time for battle, not partying!
 - (3) Behave properly [εὐσχημόνως περιπατέω]—13:13
 - (a) Not in intemperate excesses [κῶμος καὶ μέθη]—13:13a
 - (b) Not in sexual perversion [κοίτη καὶ ἀσέλγεια]—13:13b
 - (c) Not in social perversion [ἔρις καὶ ζῆλος]—13:13c
 - (4) But put on [ἐνδύω] Christ and make no provision [πρόνοια μὴ ποιέω] for the flesh—13:14
 - (a) Let me give you at least 7 elements involved in this:
 - Involvement (not just attendance) in a local church
 - Godly friendships
 - Meaningful personal time in God's Word & prayer
 - Accountability
 - Genuinely serve others
 - A wise use of time
 - (b) What does planning ahead look like?
 - (i) You make provision when you buy things associated with temptation, when we make it easy for ourselves to sin, when we give a higher priority to the physical rather than the spiritual.
 - (ii) If you don't want to fall, don't walk where it's slippery! Don't prove your purity in a porn shop or porn web site, or your simplicity of life in a shopping mall!
- g) BE ABSTAINING from the desire of the flesh—1st Peter 2:11-12
 - i) Context—living among unbelievers
 - ii) Specific thoughts
 - (1) Remember we are aliens and strangers in this world—2:11a
 - (2) Hold yourself back from [ἀπέχω] these lusts which are waging war against your soul—2:11b
 - (3) While keeping your lifestyle morally good [καλός] before the unsaved—2:12

Take-home truth: God the Spirit desires to make you like God the Son to the glory of God the Father